

# St Vincent's Hospital Network

## 390 Victoria Street, Darlinghurst NSW 2010

Telephone: 8382 1111

Facsimile: 9332 4142

Website: [www.stvincents.com.au](http://www.stvincents.com.au)

Business Hours: 9.00 am - 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday

Chief Executive: Steven Rubic

Although not a part of NSW Health, the St Vincent's Hospital Network (SVHN) provides public health services at three Sydney facilities - St Vincent's Hospital and the Sacred Heart Hospice at Darlinghurst and St Joseph's at Auburn.

For further information please refer to the St Vincent's Hospital Network's annual reviews and reports.

## Chief Executive's Year in Review

As part of National Health Reform, the NSW government recognised St Vincent's Hospital, the Sacred Heart Hospice and St Joseph's Hospital, Auburn as a Local Health Network (LHN) in January 2011.

The establishment of St Vincent's Health Network works in well with the national governance changes within St Vincent's Health Australia (SVHA). This has already seen some exciting opportunities present as a united group, particularly in relation to expanding its mission to become an undisputed leader in innovative, quality compassionate health care across the Australian landscape. As well as increasing potential for greater synergies between the Organisation's public hospital, private hospital and aged care services at a group level.

Visitors to the St Vincent's Campus in recent times would have noticed the amount of construction work and physical change that has taken place. In many ways these physical changes are reflective of the dynamic nature of the Organisation's endeavours..

At the centre of these endeavours is the St Vincent's and Mater Health Service (SVandMHS) Strategic Plan which is designed to respond to Australia's projected population growth, shifts in disease patterns, increasing healthcare costs and evolving healthcare trends in keeping with the Commonwealth's health reform agenda. Fundamentally this Plan is about remaining true to the Service's mission of responding to community need.

During the past year, St Vincent's has made some major inroads in establishing the Campus Planning Project which builds on the recommendations from the Campus Clinical Plan.

Currently underway is a multifaceted consultation process involving the engagement of architects to develop concept work around Capital Master Planning that will ensure the Campus has the appropriate physical resources to support the clinical, research and teaching endeavours of St Vincent's well into the future.

Operationally, St Vincent's has focused heavily in the past twelve months on improving patient access and patient flow through the Hospital. Mainly through the endeavours of the St Vincent's Patient Flow and Sustainable Access Committee we have worked collaboratively to significantly improve bed access and treatment times. This has been reflected in many of our key patient flow performance targets being achieved or surpassed in recent times.

Clinically the St Vincent's Campus continues to make major inroads in pioneering new treatments to further improve patient outcomes. One major area where St Vincent's has become an international leader is in the development of heart and lung mechanical assist devices. In previous years, about one quarter of patients on the heart transplant list died before receiving a new heart. Today, thanks to the mechanical devices that St Vincent's has helped pioneer, the number has dropped to 5% of patients. The Hospital recently performed the southern hemisphere's first Total Artificial Heart (TAH) transplant.

Last year St Vincent's opened the O'Brien Centre; Australia's first facility to integrate community and mental health with drug and alcohol services. We are pleased to report that since its commissioning, the O'Brien Centre is proving a wonderful physical environment for creating new paradigms of healthcare. The physicality of the O'Brien Centre ensures that the patient is the focal point of care and a co-ordinated effort to maximise patient outcomes.

A case in point of this is the St Vincent's Homeless Health Framework where these St Vincent's Units are working in unison to provide one integrated and cohesive model of care. This year, the Hospital has intensified its efforts to address homeless health issues and provide a more holistic and cohesive service which is central to the Hospital's mission of caring for the sick, the poor and the marginalised.

Located in an area characterised by a population with Australia's highest concentration of homelessness, St Vincent's provides community outreach in streets, parks and general community settings. The traditional design of health services tends to support a fragmented approach to care, with limited integration between specialities. Homeless individuals frequently present with a range of co-occurring health conditions along with housing and other psychosocial issues.

St Vincent's has identified key opportunities for improving access to a wider range of services as well as strategies for the delivery of cohesive, multi-speciality care-co-ordination, resulting in a range of outreach and campus-based services designed to meet each individual's health needs.

These initiatives have coincided with new funding - St Vincent's has recently been allocated responsibility for two projects arising from the NSW and Federal Governments' National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness, including:

1. *Co-ordinated Exit Planning for the Emergency Department* – to provide sustainable support, and also the development of support pathways from the hospital to community.
2. *Way2Home Assertive Outreach Health Team* – a multi-speciality team providing outreach health services to chronically homeless in the City of Sydney Local Government Area. A collaboration between NSW Health, Housing NSW and the City of Sydney Council, the Way2Home Service consists of a health outreach team and an Assertive Outreach Support Team, who will provide housing and other psychosocial support to the same client group, seeking sustainable exits from homelessness.

A multi-speciality Assessment and Co-ordination team has also been developed, with a single telephone number for all homeless health referrals, streamlining access to services.

The final initiative is the likely establishment of a Homeless Healthcare Centre, 'Medicottage'. Services will include: sub-acute medical care, including post-surgical recovery and convalescence following an inpatient admission; stabilisation on treatment programs, and; sub-acute care for individuals with mental health problems.

By facilitating collaboration in care planning between health specialties and other community agencies, Medicottage will offer an assertive and holistic approach aiming to generate more sustainable change to help break the cycle of homelessness.

Guided by the SVHA Reconciliation Action Plan, the facilities of the St Vincent's Health Network have initiated specific programs that are working to foster and support equity and access to healthcare in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Many initiatives are already under way, whilst others including executive shadowing for students in senior school years and a mentor program for the first 12 months of employment are soon to be finalised. Some of these include:

- A collaboration with Redfern Aboriginal Medical Service to provide a fortnightly orthopaedic specialist clinic. Offering a wide range of musculoskeletal services.
- An association with Pius X Aboriginal Corporation for the past eight years where the St Vincent's ENT team has

operated an Aboriginal outreach clinic in Moree. Taking place every six weeks, the clinic assists in the prevention and management of ear disease - in particular amongst children.

- Connections, an Aboriginal women's art therapy program that has united over 150 female mental health consumers.
- A partnership with the Aboriginal Mental Health Service which cares for indigenous clients in the inner city and is bridging the gap between government and community with outreach partners including Mission.
- Healthcare professionals throughout the Network participate in an online cultural orientation program that can be accessed through clinical workstations. Accredited by the Australian Royal College of Nursing, the program looks at cultural perceptions of Aboriginal people and is designed to create better understanding of the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients.

Through ongoing investment in research, St Vincent's has made major inroads in developing one of the country's largest research hubs - the St Vincent's Research Precinct – that will facilitate the development of novel diagnostic, treatment and prevention strategies to improve the prevention and management of disease.

One of a number of major recent research breakthroughs on the Campus includes the identification of a key pathway that contributes to the inability of specific brain cells to proliferate and differentiate appropriately leading to compromised repair in multiple sclerosis (MS) and possibly other brain diseases.

The international team, led by Professor Bruce Brew, Director of Neurology at St Vincent's used adult stem cells from humans and mice and showed that inhibiting a certain neural pathway with various drugs can increase stem cell numbers and their ability to differentiate into other cells thereby improving repair to previously damaged tissue.

Still on research, construction work of the \$120 million Kinghorn Cancer Centre – a partnership between St Vincent's and the Garvan Institute - is progressing very well, with the Centre scheduled to open on time in the middle of next year. The Centre will integrate world class cancer research with best practices, rapidly translating research findings to patient care.

New building and equipment are exciting and tangible reflections of the Service's Mission. In essence though, kind and compassionate care should always be the hallmark of what the Service does. This is why the Network was particularly delighted when Paul Esplin, a Registered Nurse with the St Vincent's Hospital Homeless Health Outreach team, was recently awarded Nurse of the Year at the 2011

HESTA Australian Nursing Awards in Melbourne. Paul has spent the last four years looking after the homeless people of Sydney. His clients are rough sleepers in the inner city, many living with severe mental illness, developmental delay, intellectual disability, drug and alcohol addiction or social isolation.

*In another major external acknowledgment, ACU health sciences honours student, Asmara Jammali-Blasi - whose research into stroke outcomes for patients as part of her thesis at St Vincent's Hospital - completed through the ACU Faculty of Health Sciences Student Support Scheme - was awarded an ACU University Medal for her honours thesis - the first time a nurse has received the honour.*

The scheme enables students to complete their honours research two days per week at the St Vincent's and Mater Health Sydney/ACU Nursing Research Institute and work in the hospital wards for the remaining three days per week.

Over at St Joseph's Auburn, 2011 saw the Hospital celebrate 125 years of service to the community and staff past and present, volunteers and friends gathered in February to mark this great achievement.

Coinciding with this milestone, this year also marks a 60 year commitment to St Joseph's by Mrs Marie Scollard; long-time St Joseph's staff member, board member and supporter who addressed the gathering. Noting the extraordinary leadership and influence of the Sisters of Charity who founded the hospital. Mrs Scollard also recalled the extraordinary service St Joseph's provided to the people of Sydney during two of its worst crises—the train collision at Berala in 1952 and the derailment at Granville in 1977.

St Joseph's Village, Auburn opened a new unit for people with dementia in late March.

St Joseph's Village is a residential aged care facility collocated with St Joseph's Hospital on the Auburn Campus comprising 27 independent living units, 88 low care beds, with ageing in place, of which 18 provide dementia specific care and 35 community care packages. The Village works collaboratively with St Joseph's Hospital and is part of the residential aged care services provided by St Vincent's and Mater Health Sydney.

Next year, St Vincent's and Mater Health Sydney will take over the Statewide Huntington's Disease Service with a new Huntington's Disease Unit on the St Joseph's site in Auburn.

The new unit will be owned and operated by SVandMHS in partnership with WSLHD Huntington's Service at Westmead Hospital. The relocation of the residential component will be undertaken with a revised model of

care. This requires a 20 bed dedicated facility to be constructed, comprising 14 residential aged care beds, 4 neuropsychiatric beds and 2 assessment and monitoring beds.

To accommodate the new service a new building will be constructed. St Joseph's Campus recently undertook a Site Master Planning exercise during which a suitable site for the Huntington's Disease Unit was identified. The proposed site is on the western side of the Campus and it is proposed that the new building would join to the end of the Catherine Mahoney building. Construction on site is scheduled to commence in January 2012 and the unit will be ready to receive patients in September 2012.

**Steven Rubic, Chief Executive**